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WISDOM FOR THE WISE

A BOOK OF PROVERBS

By

LORENZO SOSSO

Author of
Proverbs for the people

Wisdom for the wise — who need it
More than the babes to whom we feed it.

New York
Dodge Publishing Company
220 East 23d Street

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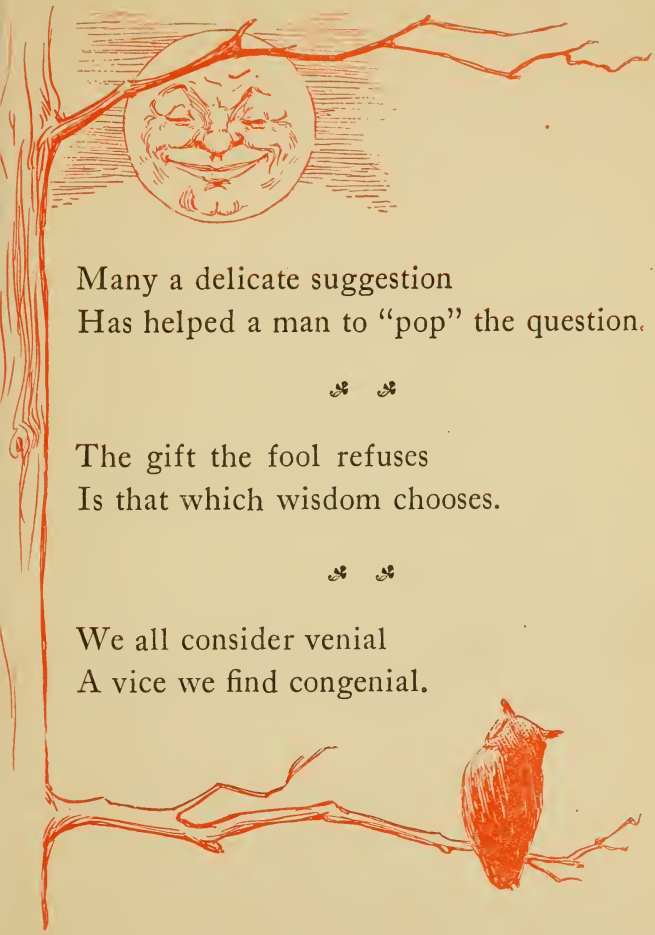
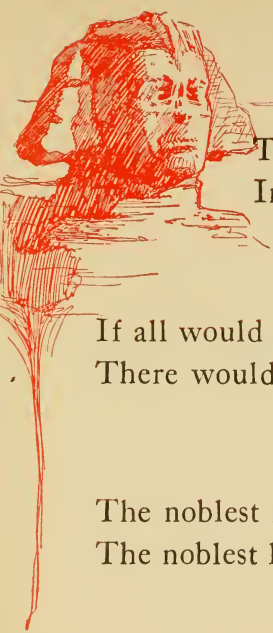
The present volume contains a numerous selection from the author's "Proverbs of the People" and "Wisdom for the Wise," with the addition of more than fifty new and original proverbs now published for the first time.



Many a delicate suggestion
Has helped a man to "pop" the question.

The gift the fool refuses
Is that which wisdom chooses.

We all consider venial
A vice we find congenial.



There's little of divinity
In modern feminity.

If all would practice what they preach
There would be no one left to teach.

The noblest life—the life of labor;
The noblest love—to love your neighbor.

A dole of thanks, though but a pittance,
Assists in gratitude's acquaintance.

They only who have loved or hated
Know the full meaning of mismated.

☙ ☙

We always play the game to win,
We never think about the sin.

☙ ☙

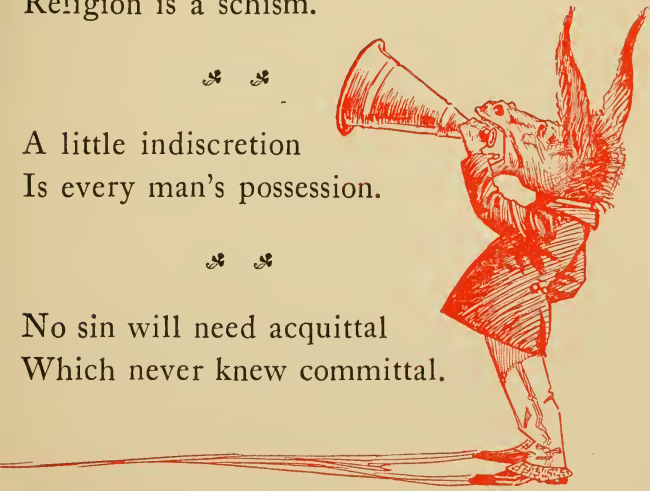
Seen through a sceptic's prism
Religion is a schism.

☙ ☙

A little indiscretion
Is every man's possession.

☙ ☙

No sin will need acquittal
Which never knew committal.

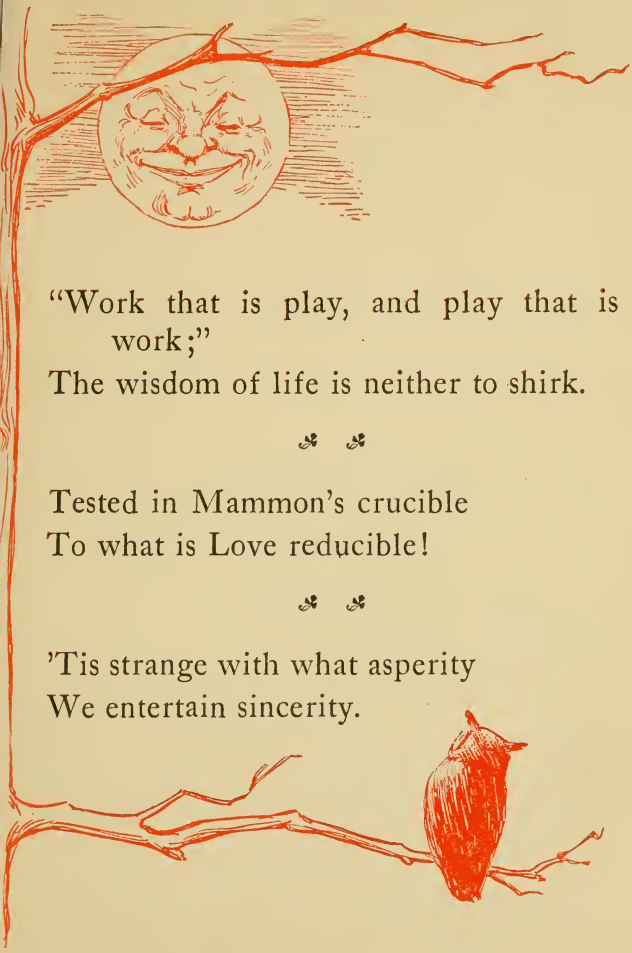


Lament the present not the past
If few of Fortune's gifts thou hast.

Rich, poor, or proud or gifted,
All through Death's sieve are sifted.

Some women are a blessing:
The others—keep you guessing!

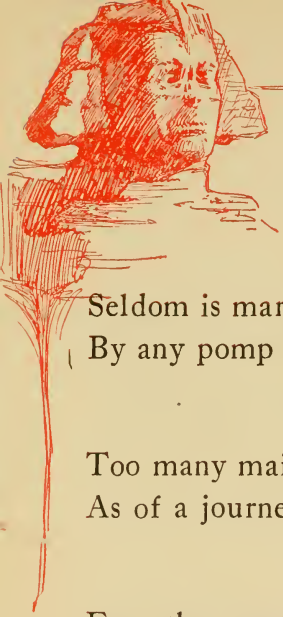
Insult not through indignity
Youth's dreams or old's benignity.



"Work that is play, and play that is
work;"
The wisdom of life is neither to shirk.

Tested in Mammon's crucible
To what is Love reducible!

'Tis strange with what asperity
We entertain sincerity.



The virtue of society
Is certainly not piety.

Seldom is martyrdom attended
By any pomp or pageant splendid.

Too many maidens think of marriage
As of a journey in a carriage.

Even the greatest wisdom fails
When weighing love in even scales.

However great, however little,
All gods made out of clay are brittle.

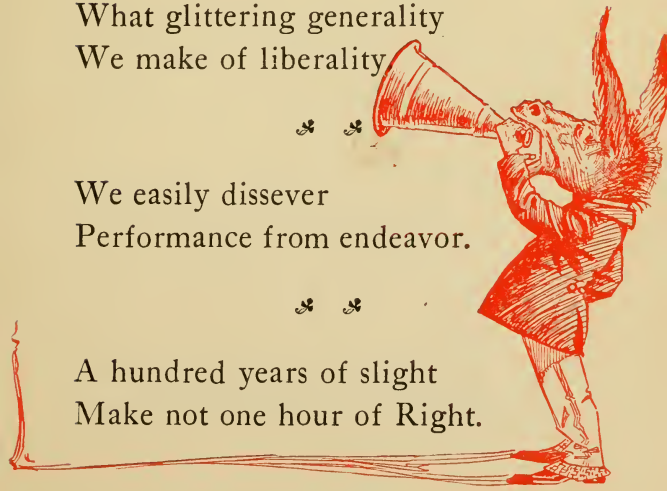
Nothing can be more hateful
Than friendship turned ungrateful.

Cunning has always cheated
Those who are most conceited.

What glittering generality
We make of liberality.

We easily dissever
Performance from endeavor.

A hundred years of slight
Make not one hour of Right.



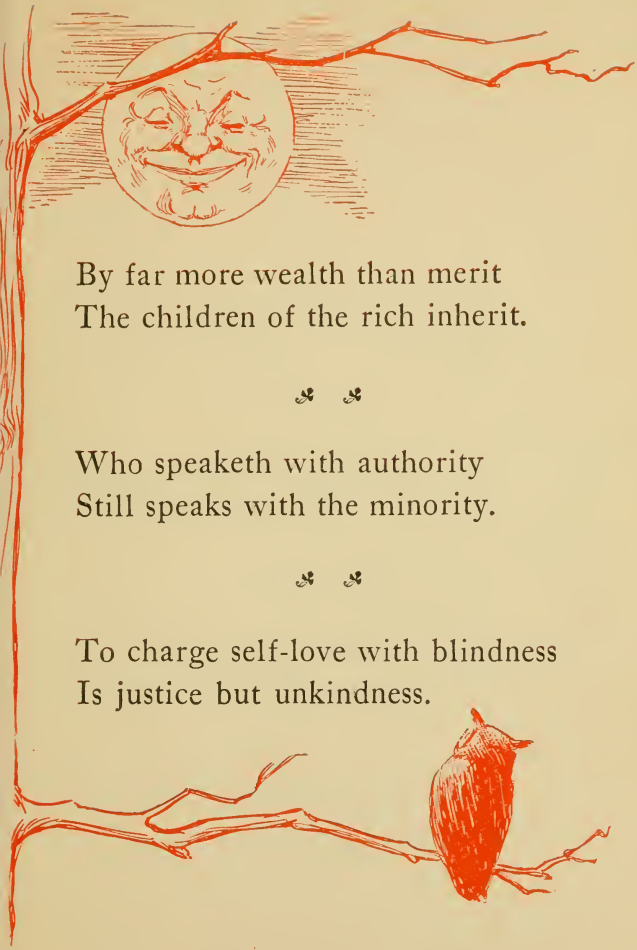
Death speaks the valedictory
To Life's defeat or victory.

Do thou good deeds; and in the doing
Remember they will bear renewing.

Much must he deal in courtesies
Who every one alike would please.

'Tis deeper wisdom to refrain
Than to presume to speak in vain.

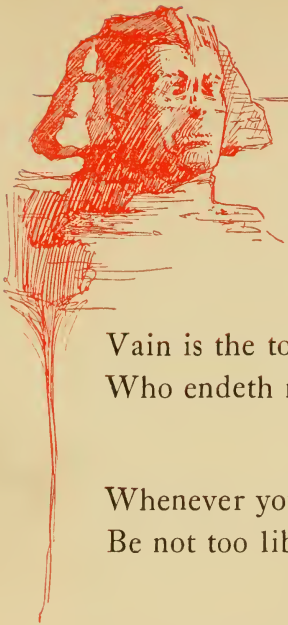
A pigmy dwelling with the giants
Is apt to boast of self-reliance.



By far more wealth than merit
The children of the rich inherit.

Who speaketh with authority
Still speaks with the minority.

To charge self-love with blindness
Is justice but unkindness.



It is not only foxes
Who deal in paradoxes.

Vain is the toil of any man
Who endeth not what he began.

Whenever you would give advice
Be not too liberal; keep a slice.

'Tis not the splendor of the blade
Which makes the enemy afraid.

Some men presume to greatness
With too austere sedateness.

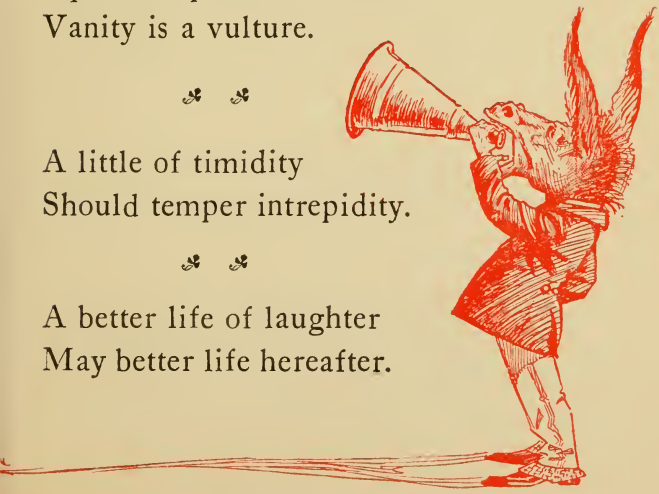
They preach of life's amenities
Who profit by its lenities.

There is no heavier fetter
Than that which binds a debtor.

Upon the peaks of culture
Vanity is a vulture.

A little of timidity
Should temper intrepidity.

A better life of laughter
May better life hereafter.



The coward still finds cause to fear
Though danger may be never near.

Seek not all wisdom in a well,
The stars have also things to tell.

The foolish are contented
When by a fool they're represented.

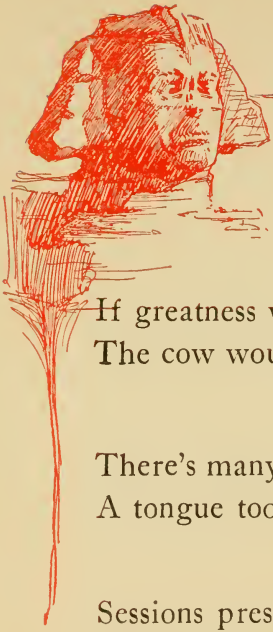
They who spend life in dancing
Are seldom found advancing.

Better to speak a platitude
Than not express your gratitude.

According as you may contrast
The petty changes to the vast.

Pride always finds a sumptuous niche
In the heart of a beggar grown suddenly
rich.

When Love grows too observant
It ceases to be fervent.



'Tis only his reverses
The speculator curses.

If greatness were enough for one
The cow would soon the hare outrun.

There's many torments waiting
A tongue too prone to prating.

Sessions presided o'er by hate
Never see cause to arbitrate.

Always the greatest quack 'tis
Who boasts about his practice.

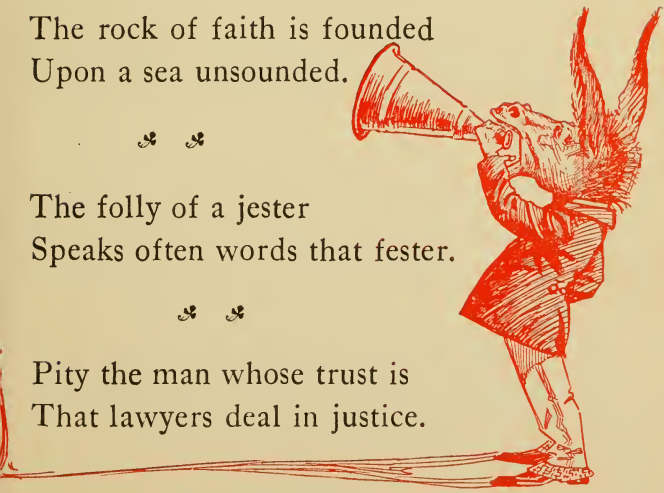
God's precept only mattered
Until fair Eve was flattered.

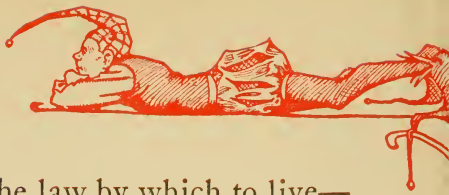
A compromise, however bad,
Is better than a lawsuit had.

The rock of faith is founded
Upon a sea unsounded.

The folly of a jester
Speaks often words that fester.

Pity the man whose trust is
That lawyers deal in justice.





This is the law by which to live—
To give to get; to get to give.

❧ ❧

If only given the occasion
A sinner does not need persuasion.

❧ ❧

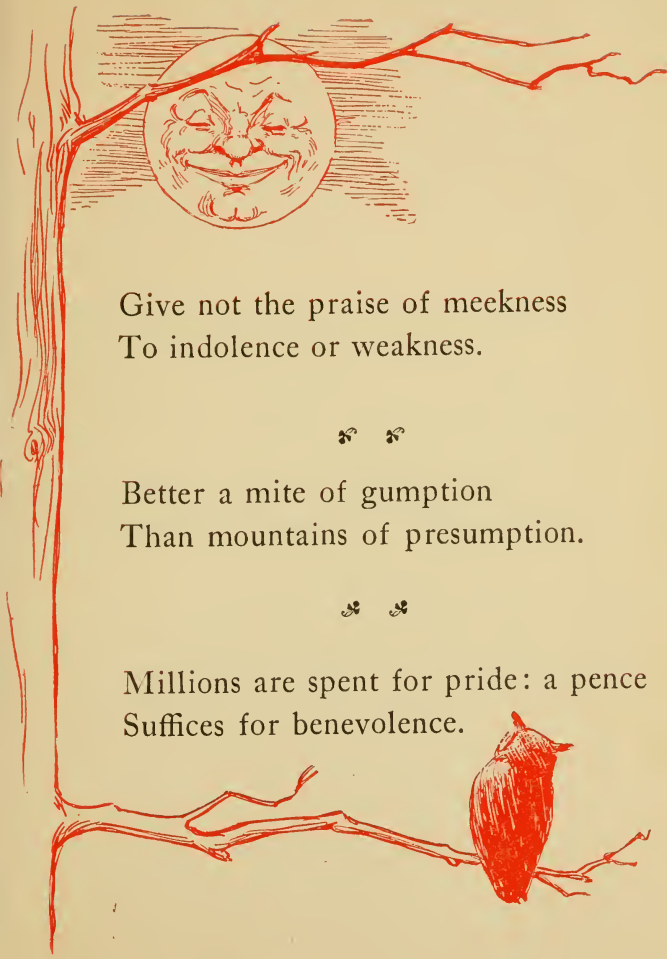
To misconstrue veracity
Is deemed in law sagacity.

❧ ❧

Make of Adversity a friend,
Much precious lore hath she to lend.

❧ ❧

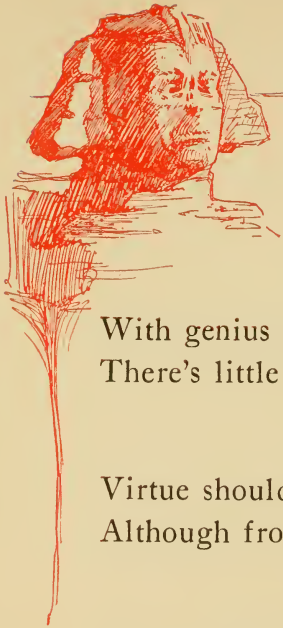
It is the wise man's folly
Which makes fools melancholy.



Give not the praise of meekness
To indolence or weakness.

Better a mite of gumption
Than mountains of presumption.

Millions are spent for pride: a pence
Suffices for benevolence.



To trust to an illusion
Is reason in confusion.

With genius a disease or blunder
There's little left in life of wonder.

Virtue should be commended
Although from vice descended.

The hate of man is frightful:
The hate of woman spiteful.

Dilute with some discreetness
Love's honey-cup of sweetness.

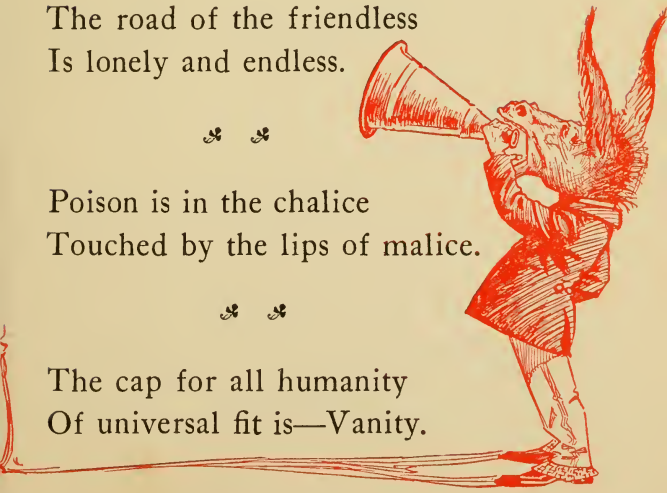
If manners will not make a man
Effrontery surely never can.

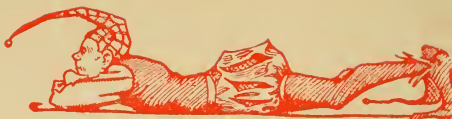
Better poor independence
Than royalty's resplendence.

The road of the friendless
Is lonely and endless.

Poison is in the chalice
Touched by the lips of malice.

The cap for all humanity
Of universal fit is—Vanity.





All wisdom to be popular
Must learn the art of being jocular.

❧ ❧

There is a law for each occasion.
Another law for its evasion.

❧ ❧

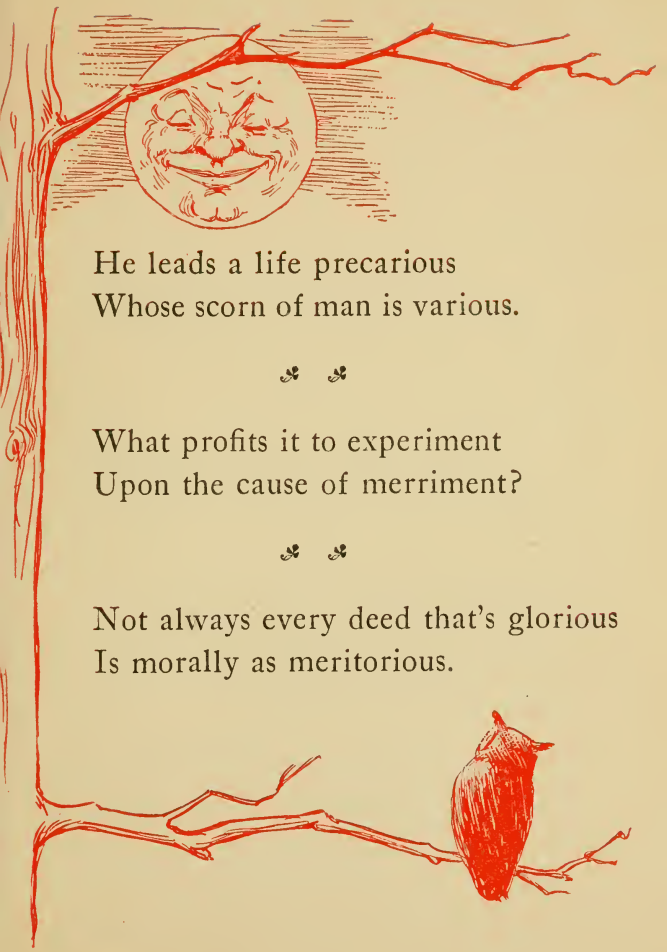
No wind is good of any sort
To him who steereth for no port.

❧ ❧

'Tis when we toil for guerdon
That virtue seems a burden.

❧ ❧

If death were less procurable
Life would seem more endurable.



He leads a life precarious
Whose scorn of man is various.

What profits it to experiment
Upon the cause of merriment?

Not always every deed that's glorious
Is morally as meritorious.

No interdict can leaven
The charity of heaven.

Some sinners would adventure
To sign a saint's indenture.

It would be folly for the rabbit
To mask itself in lion's habit.

'Tis fear as much as feeling
Compels a sinner's kneeling.

Many a seed worth sowing
Has proved a weed in growing.

If quality be Nature's law
Then Jacob still should rule Esau.

☙ ☙

How true! we cry, how striking!
Some pathos to our liking.

☙ ☙

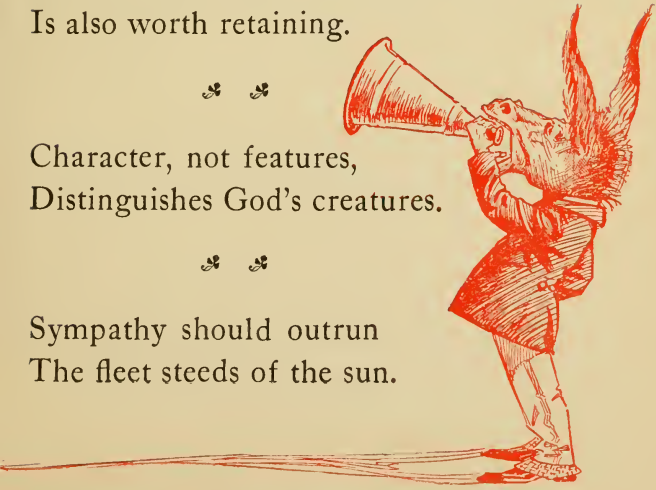
What's worth the cost of gaining
Is also worth retaining.

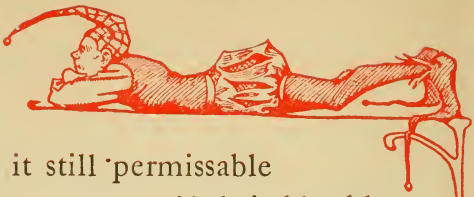
☙ ☙

Character, not features,
Distinguishes God's creatures.

☙ ☙

Sympathy should outrun
The fleet steeds of the sun.





I hold it still permissable
To kiss a woman—if she's kissable.

☘ ☘

The weathercock upon the steeple
Is not the pastor of the people.

☘ ☘

'Tis not by mental churning
That men increase their learning.

☘ ☘

We're always sure of winning
The game from the beginning.

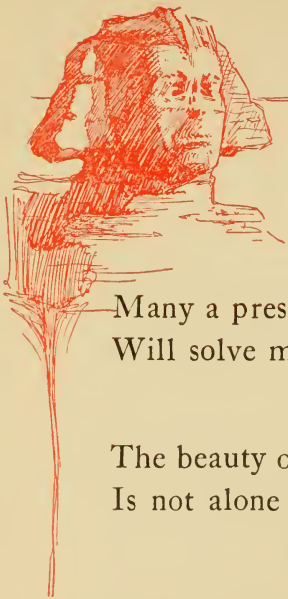
☘ ☘

Why should it seem surprising
To find Wealth patronizing?

That mountains are removeable
Must still remain unproveable.

A landmark good protection yields
Though placed between two brothers' fields.

Man's greatness and endurance
Need no divine assurance.



An amity convivial
Is generally trivial.

Many a present mystery
Will solve man's future history.

The beauty of a building
Is not alone its gilding.

A brave man never pauses
To know what valor's cause is.

However much a beggar choose
A fortune is not his to lose.

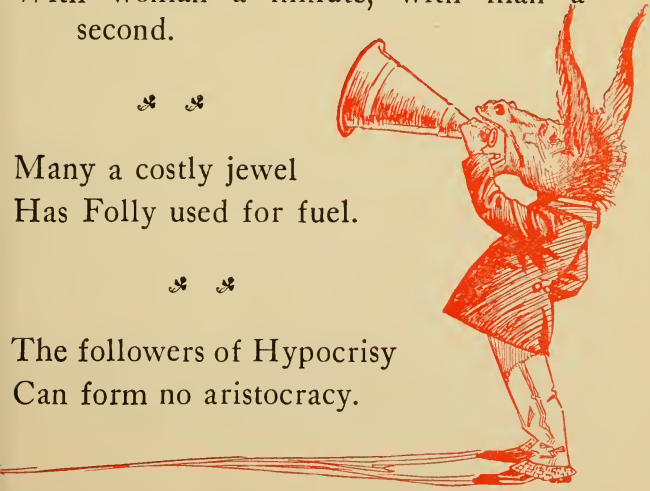
We may die with thirst at the brink of
The fountain we once scorned to drink of.

All men are dreamers—but a fraction
Fulfill the dreams of men with action.

Quickly is love's duration reckoned;
With woman a minute, with man a
second.

Many a costly jewel
Has Folly used for fuel.

The followers of Hypocrisy
Can form no aristocracy.

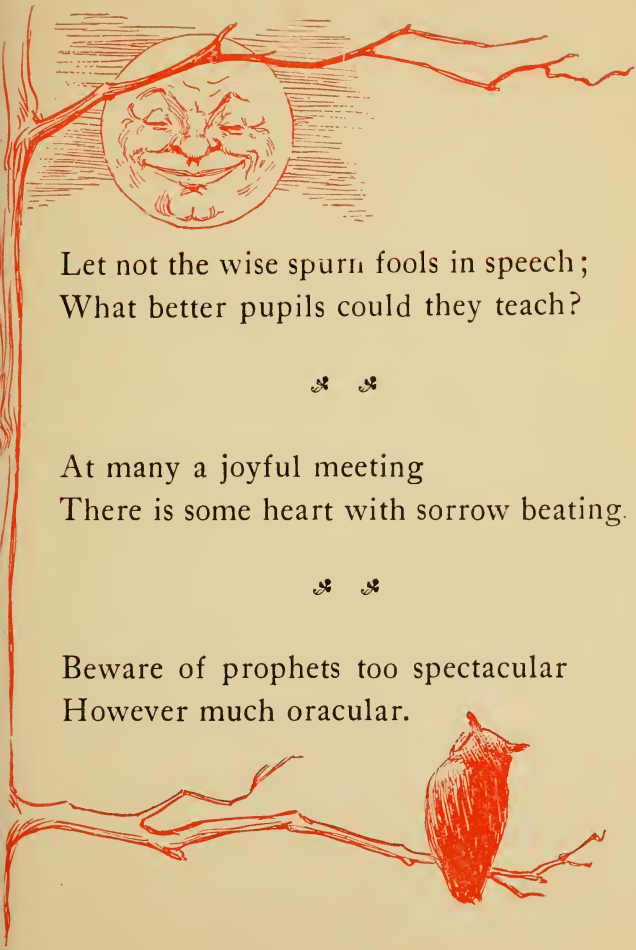


For every grain of common sense
The heaps of folly are immense.

Think not all playthings are for boys;
The oldest dotard hath his toys.

Who buys nor pays for what he got
May sell what he would rather not.

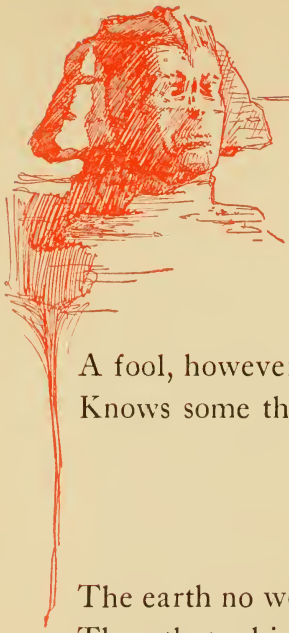
Who would lick honey from a thorn
Will soon have cause enough to mourn



Let not the wise spurn fools in speech;
What better pupils could they teach?

At many a joyful meeting
There is some heart with sorrow beating.

Beware of prophets too spectacular
However much oracular.



Men in opinion vary,
But women are contrary.

A fool, however young in years,
Knows some things better than the seers.

The earth no worse a water keepeth
Than that which in the shadow sleepeth.

Wisdom begat but children twain,
And one is Joy, and one is Pain.

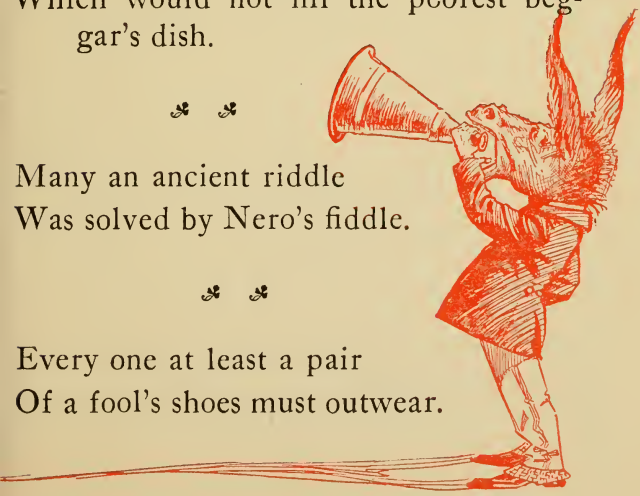
Too oft the hand which wears a glove
Knows neither charity nor love.

Folly sometimes an audience draws
Where Wisdom vainly pleads its cause.

O vain pursuit! to angle for a fish
Which would not fill the poorest beggar's dish.

Many an ancient riddle
Was solved by Nero's fiddle.

Every one at least a pair
Of a fool's shoes must outwear.

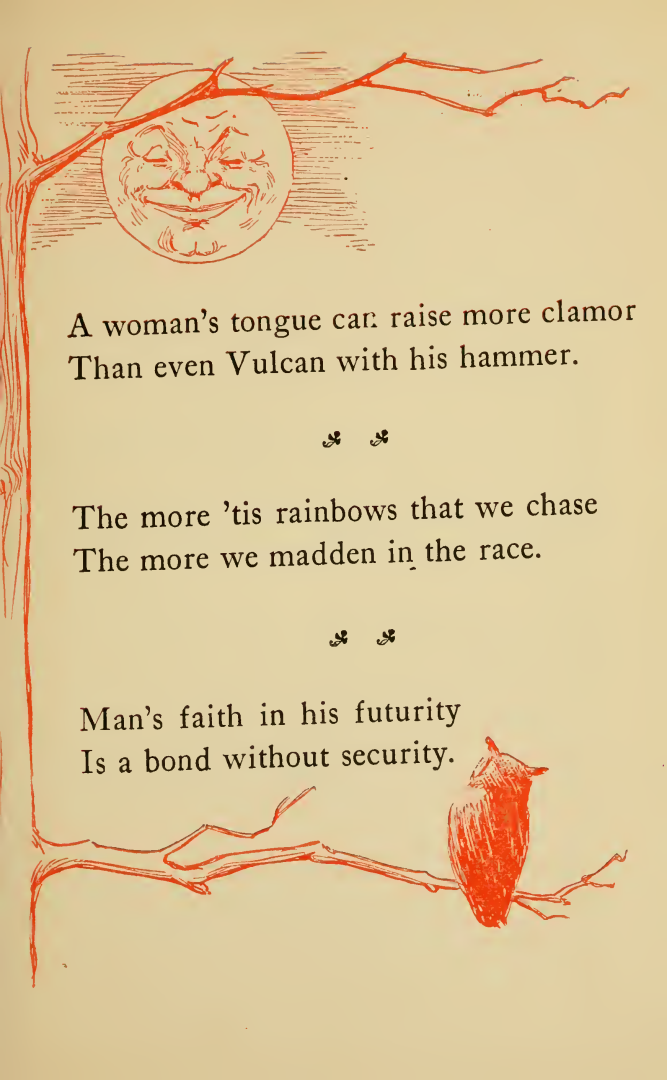


'Tis sorrow more than jollity.
Which proves a heart's true quality.

The art which makes demeanor gracious
Oft makes the character mendacious.

Vain thought to make the wisest laugh,
The cow thinks she was ne'er a calf.

The riddle of many a name unnoted;
A pearl will sink where a leaf has floated.



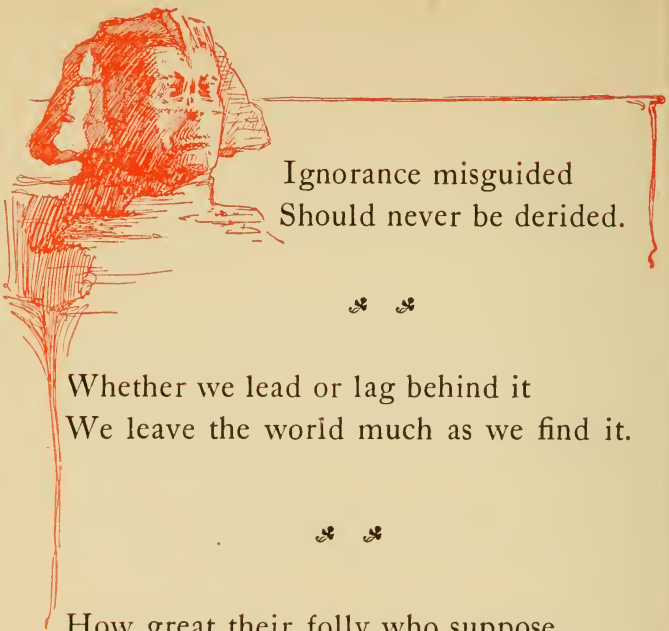
A woman's tongue can raise more clamor
Than even Vulcan with his hammer.

☘ ☘

The more 'tis rainbows that we chase
The more we madden in the race.

☘ ☘

Man's faith in his futurity
Is a bond without security.



Ignorance misguided
Should never be derided.

Whether we lead or lag behind it
We leave the world much as we find it.

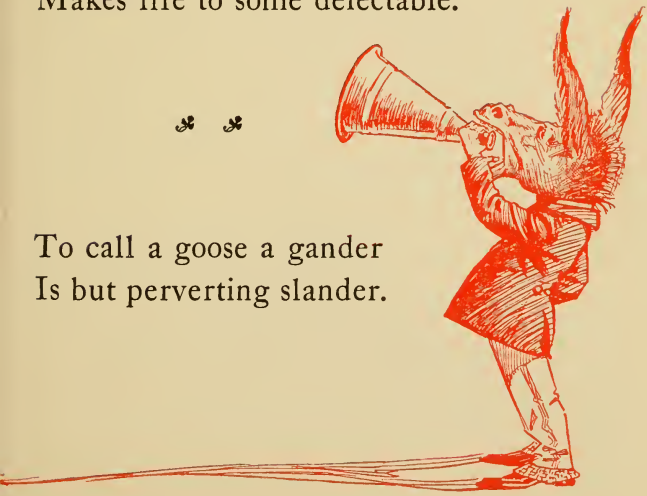
How great their folly who suppose
The thorn adds richness to the rose.

Life is a game: though none gainsay it,
How very few know how to play it!

'Tis but a poor repentance
Which follows after sentence.

The title of respectable
Makes life to some delectable.

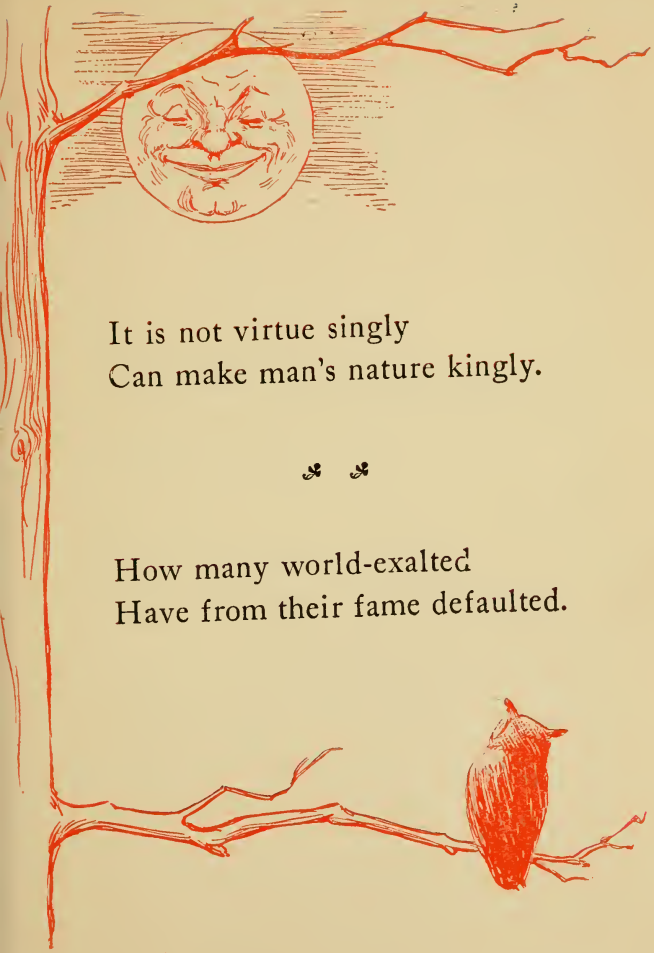
To call a goose a gander
Is but perverting slander.



The jackass still rejoices
To hear his brethren's voices.

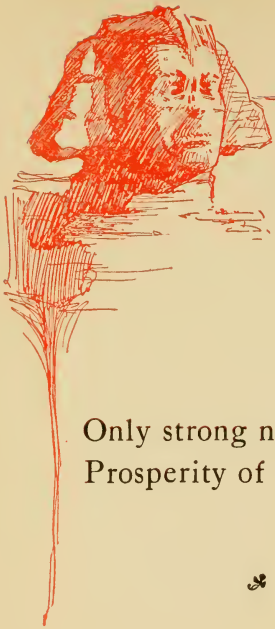
Who ever woman courted
Has often truth distorted.

Base is he who despises
The means by which he rises.



It is not virtue singly
Can make man's nature kingly.

How many world-exalted
Have from their fame defaulted.



The beauty of a sermon
Is not in stole or ermine.

☘ ☘

Only strong natures can support
Prosperity of every sort.

☘ ☘

The fox can with facility
Assume the garb humility.

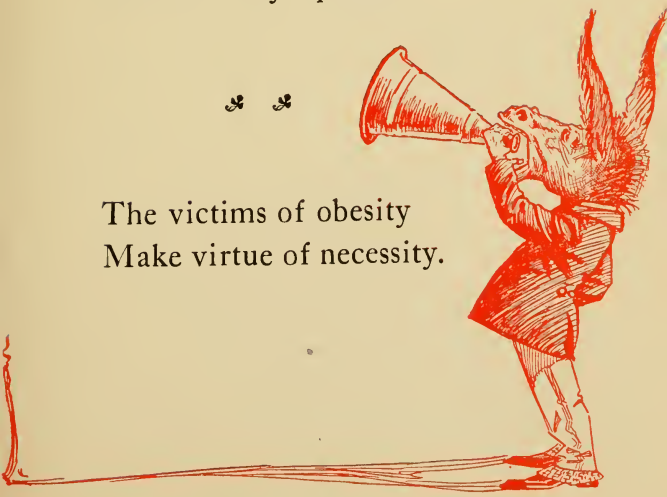
Kings dignify their station
But not their occupation.

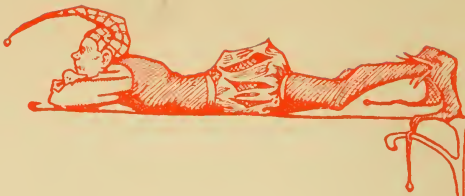
☙ ☙

'Tis useless seeeking nettles
Within a lily's petals.

☙ ☙

The victims of obesity
Make virtue of necessity.

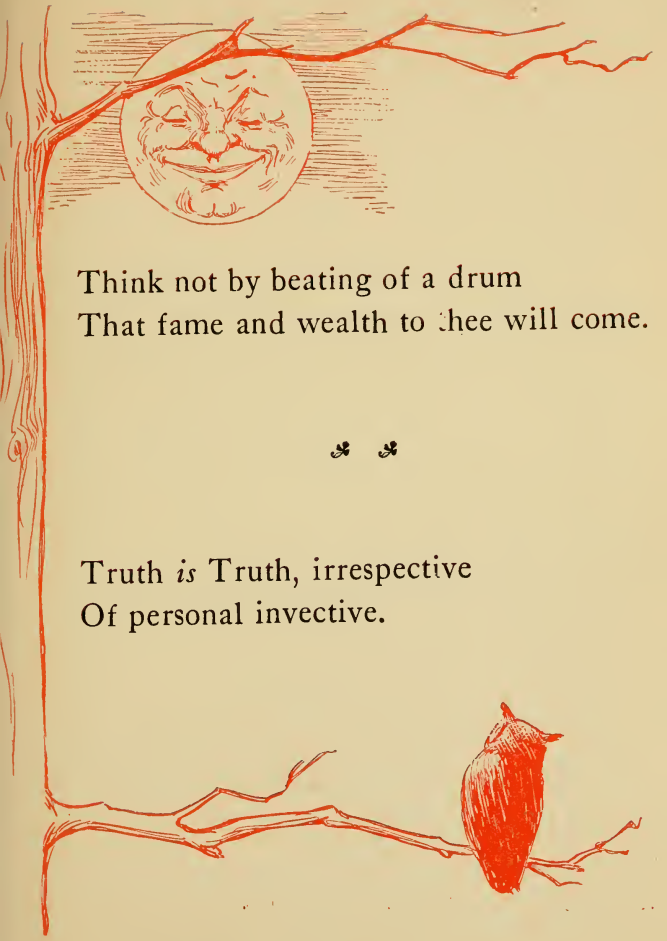




The devil laughs who audits
Man's mortuary plaudits.

'Tis not in haunted houses
The devil most carouses.

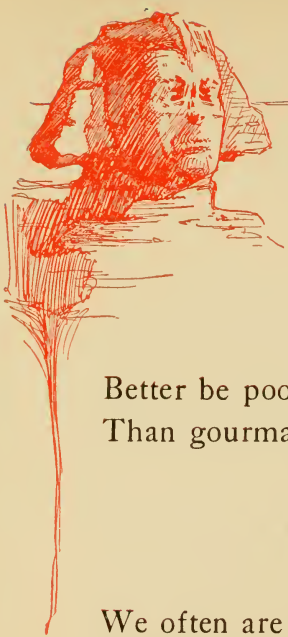
Not all the Lord's anointed
Are chosen or appointed.



Think not by beating of a drum
That fame and wealth to thee will come.

☘ ☘

Truth *is* Truth, irrespective
Of personal invective.



If lacking in ability
Redeem it with civility.

Better be poor and needy
Than gourmandized and greedy.

We often are indebted
To things we have regretted.

When fools have come to blows
Only a fool will interpose.

☙ ☙

'Tis from the wealth of sages
The world pays folly's wages.

☙ ☙

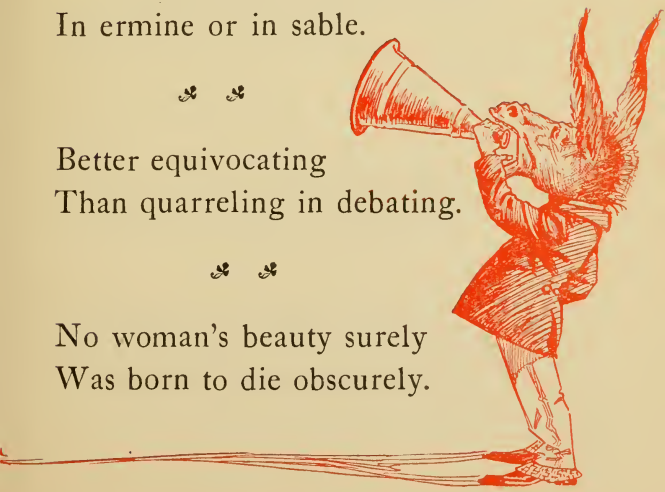
We clothe both truth and fable
In ermine or in sable.

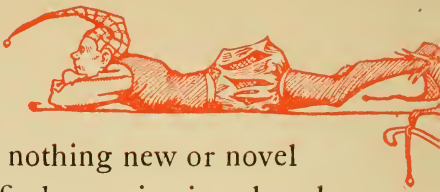
☙ ☙

Better equivocating
Than quarreling in debating.

☙ ☙

No woman's beauty surely
Was born to die obscurely.





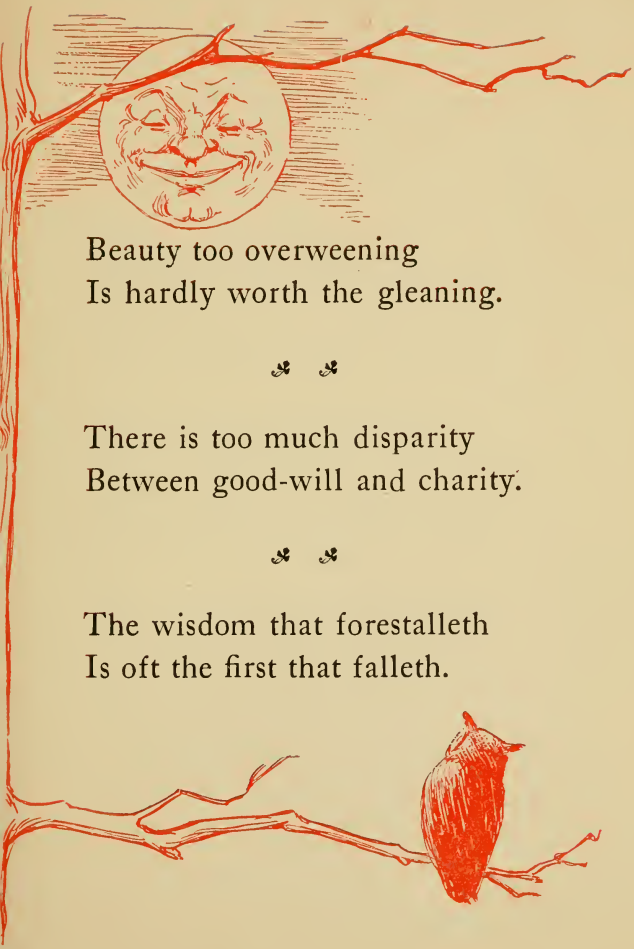
'Tis nothing new or novel
To find a genius in a hovel.

When wrongs are to be righted
Law should be expedited.

When charity extending
Don't seem too condescending.

What is the world's derision
To him who hath the vision?

Love whose affection ranges
Is soon a love which changes.



Beauty too overweening
Is hardly worth the gleaning.

❧ ❧

There is too much disparity
Between good-will and charity.

❧ ❧

The wisdom that forestalleth
Is oft the first that falleth.

The spirit of negation
Is not renunciation.

The virtues that we nourish
Are those most apt to flourish.

God weigheth in the balance
Man's virtues not his talents.

We seldom think it curious
That poets are penurious.

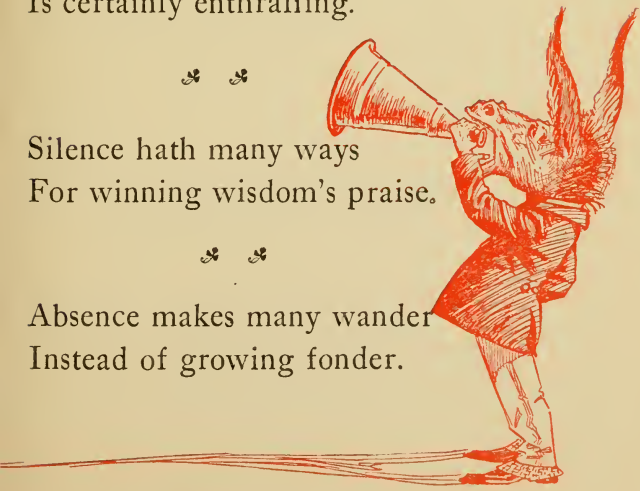
From every gnomic statement
Reason exacts rebatement.

Some men require no schooling
To learn the art of ruling.

Following Fortune's calling
Is certainly enthralling.

Silence hath many ways
For winning wisdom's praise.

Absence makes many wanderers
Instead of growing fonder.



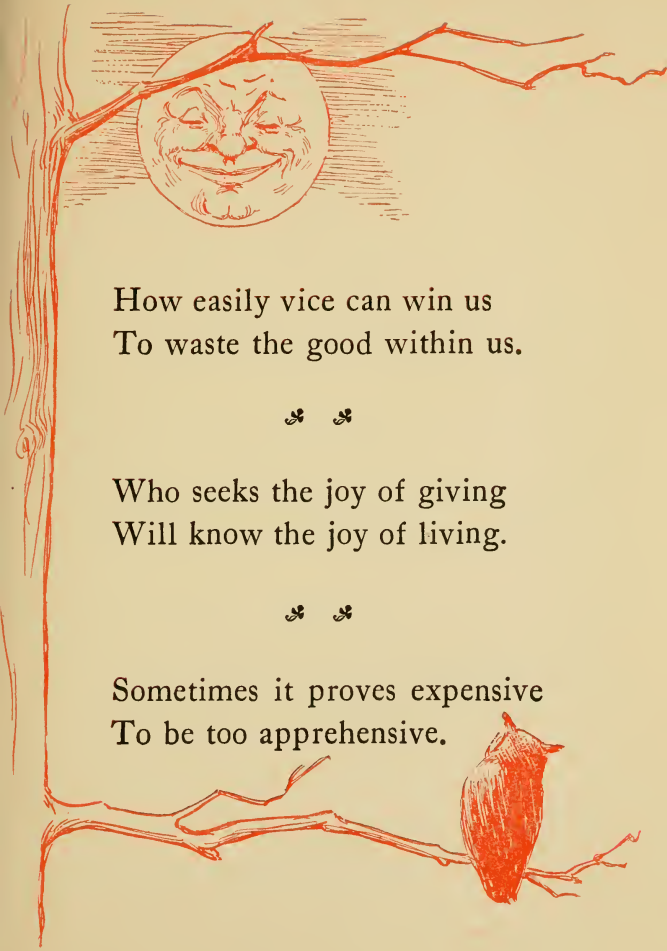
Many a stupid blunder
Has filled the world with wonder.

A single penny fairly got
Is worth a thousand that are not.

The steps are better counted
After they are surmounted.

When folly is commended
What fool can feel offended?

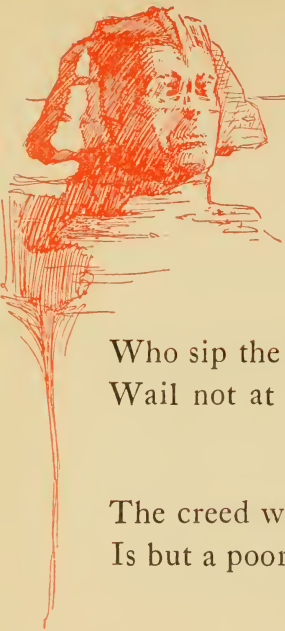
The matrimonial function
Is often Love's disjunction.



How easily vice can win us
To waste the good within us.

Who seeks the joy of giving
Will know the joy of living.

Sometimes it proves expensive
To be too apprehensive.



God loves hilarity
Free from vulgarity.

Who sip the cup of pleasure
Wail not at overmeasure.

The creed which needs apology
Is but a poor doxology.

Misfortune maketh stumble
The great more than the humble.

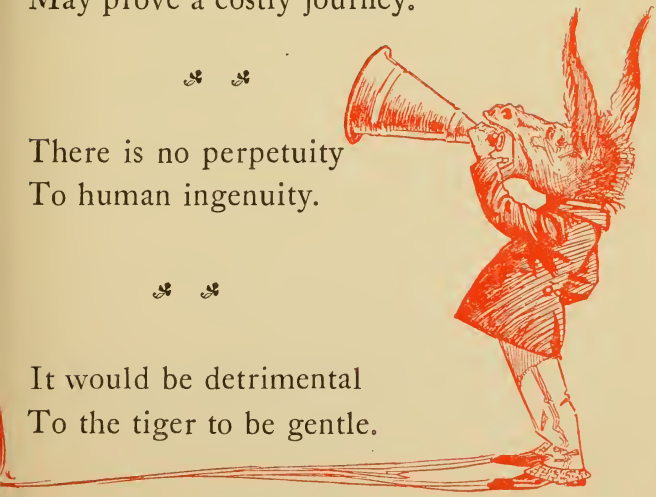
Why men are not more sensible
Is still incomprehensible.

Both cowardice and cunning
Are very apt at running.

Travel with an attorney
May prove a costly journey.

There is no perpetuity
To human ingenuity.

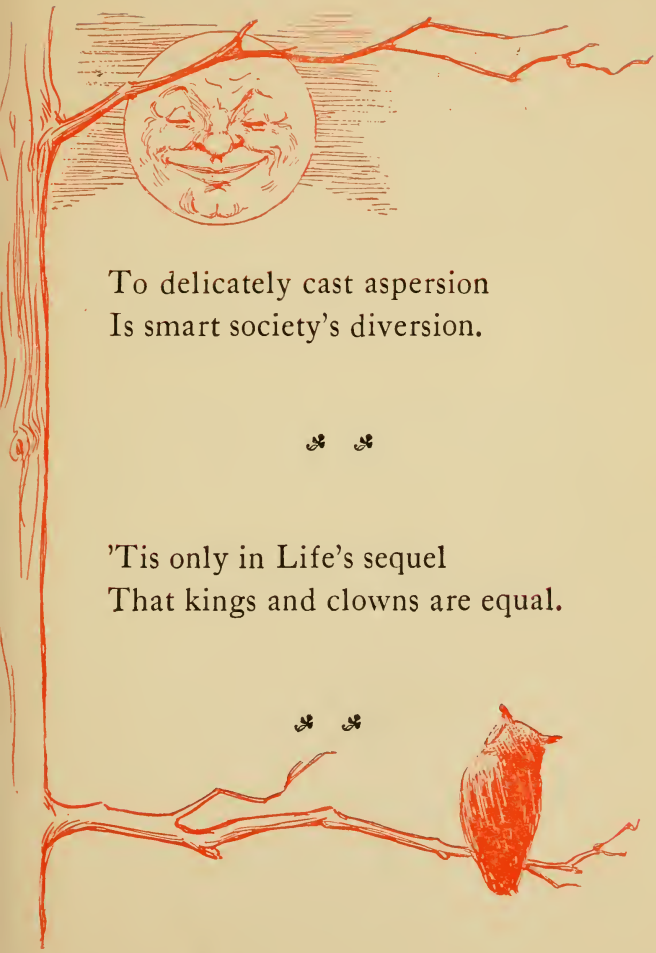
It would be detrimental
To the tiger to be gentle.



It is the eagle's pinions
Which give it wide dominions.

The more covetous the wish
The more grievous is the dish.

All women soon discover
The way to win a lover.

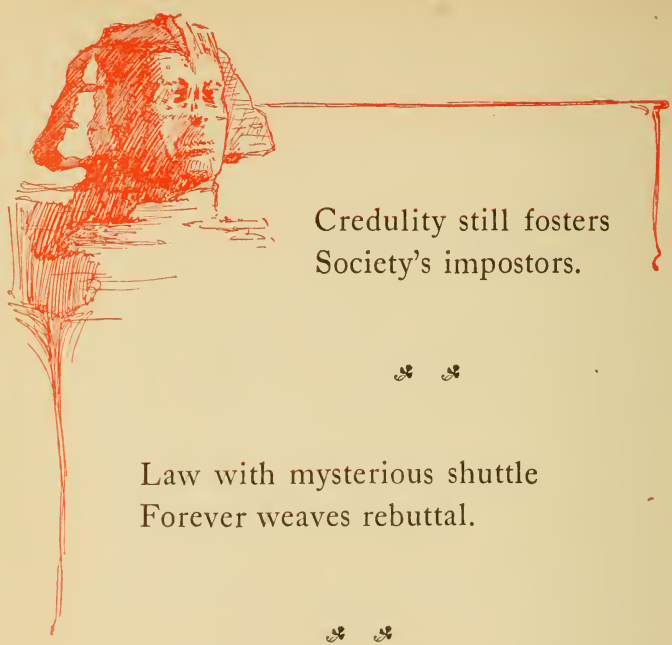


To delicately cast aspersion
Is smart society's diversion.

☘ ☘

'Tis only in Life's sequel
That kings and clowns are equal.

☘ ☘



Credulity still fosters
Society's impostors.

Law with mysterious shuttle
Forever weaves rebuttal.

A superstition deeply rooted
Cannot be easily refuted.

Some novels called romantic
Seem folly growing frantic.

☙ ☙

No want of will will always be
No want of opportunity.

☙ ☙

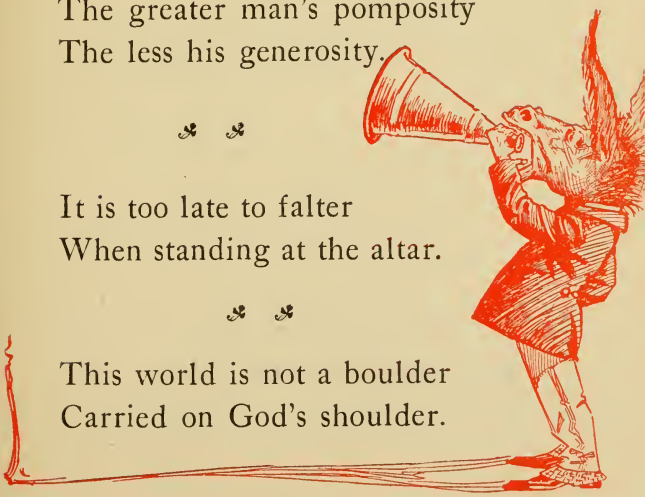
The greater man's pomposity
The less his generosity.

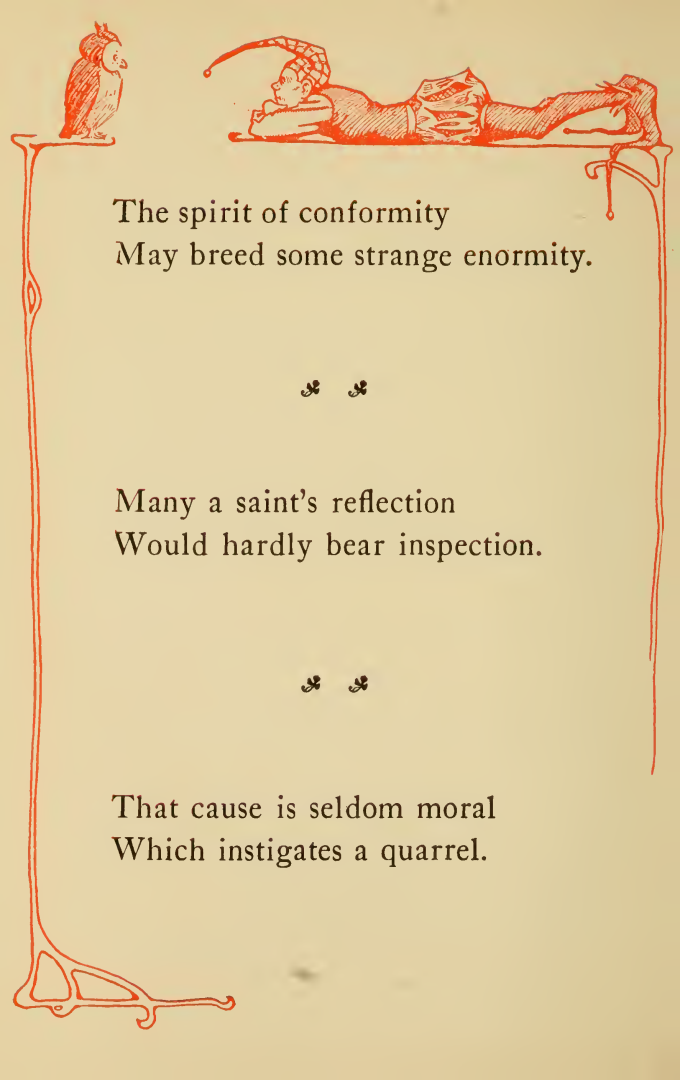
☙ ☙

It is too late to falter
When standing at the altar.

☙ ☙

This world is not a boulder
Carried on God's shoulder.

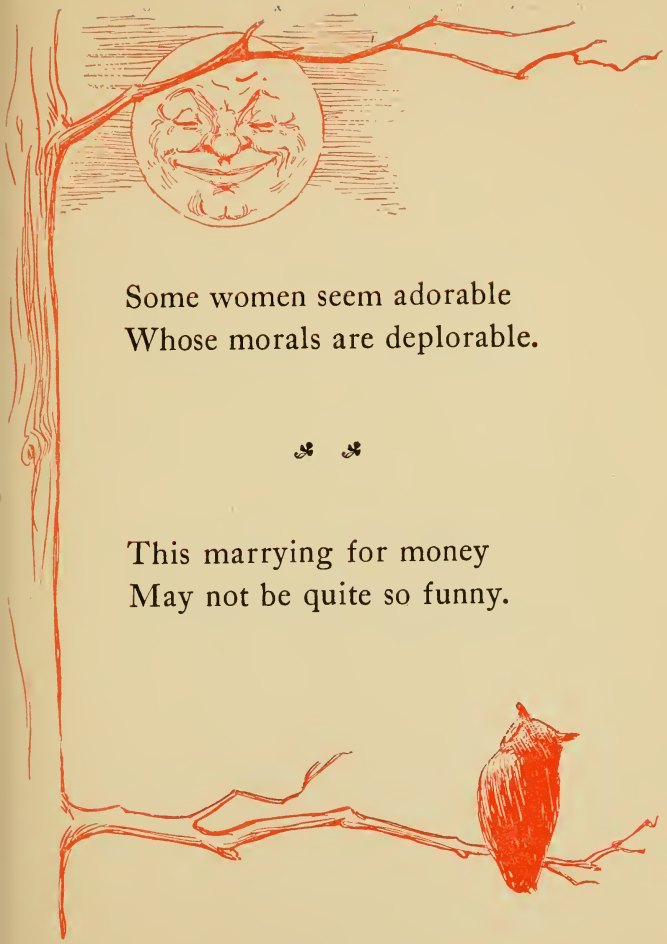




The spirit of conformity
May breed some strange enormity.

Many a saint's reflection
Would hardly bear inspection.

That cause is seldom moral
Which instigates a quarrel.



Some women seem adorable
Whose morals are deplorable.

This marrying for money
May not be quite so funny.

The spirit dutiful
Is also beautiful.

Deceit still wears upon her
The mantle of dishonor.

No genius merely cynical
Can stand upon Fame's pinnacle.

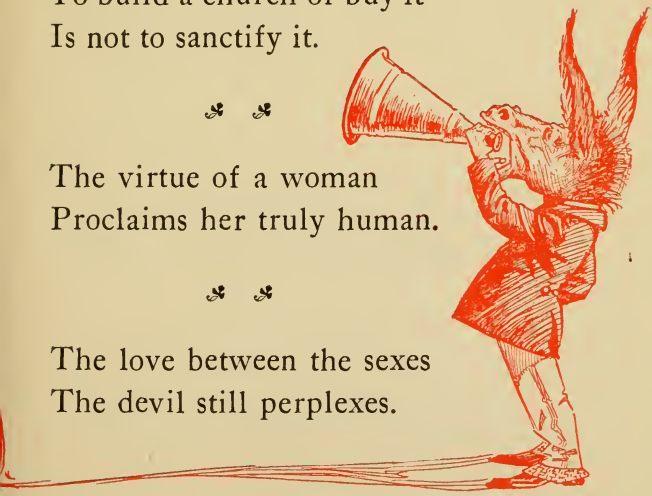
Not every rill becomes a river;
Not every arrow leaves its quiver.

A thousand die of drinking first
Ere one will die of bitter thirst.

To build a church or buy it
Is not to sanctify it.

The virtue of a woman
Proclaims her truly human.

The love between the sexes
The devil still perplexes.



To win suecess we must not stack
Too many burdens on our back.

☙ ☙

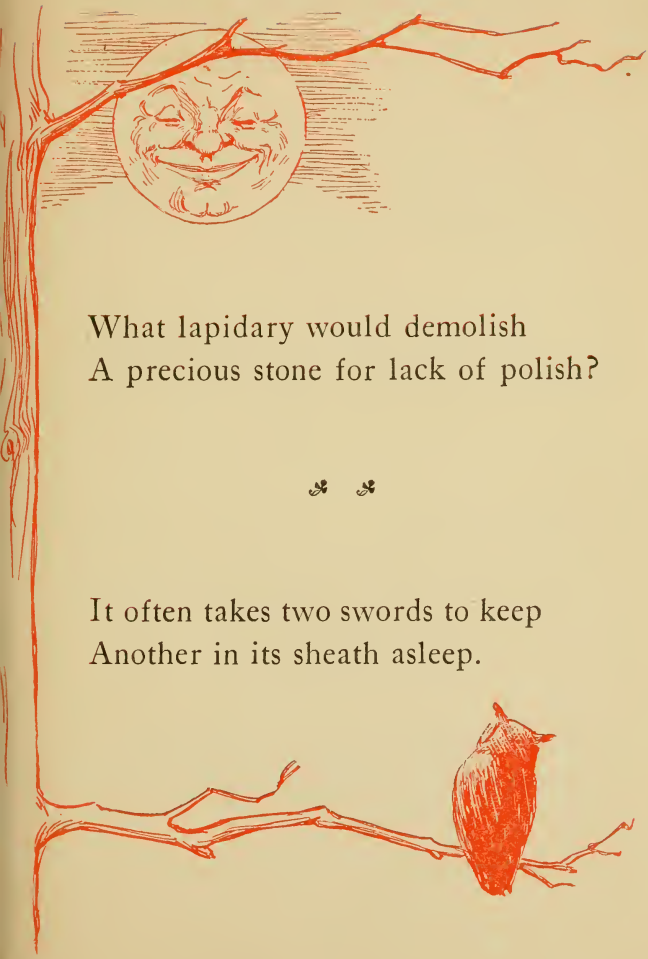
If poverty could make men cheerful
Prosperity would feel less fearful.

☙ ☙

Who stirs a pot to make it bubble
May get a scalding for his trouble.

☙ ☙

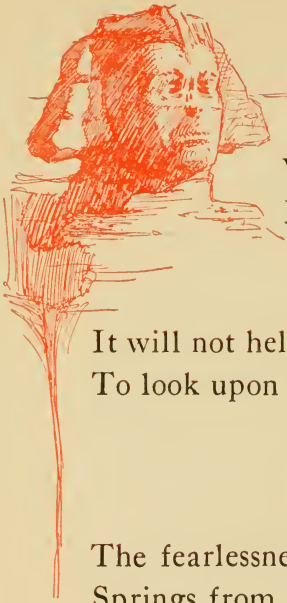
How lovingly some people handle
The tainted morsel of a scandal.



What lapidary would demolish
A precious stone for lack of polish?

☘ ☘

It often takes two swords to keep
Another in its sheath asleep.



Whatever we embellish
Rewards us by its relish.

It will not help your feet to mount
To look upon the steps and count.

The fearlessness of many an action
Springs from man's fealty to faction.

Who walks the road of splendor
Must not have feet too tender.

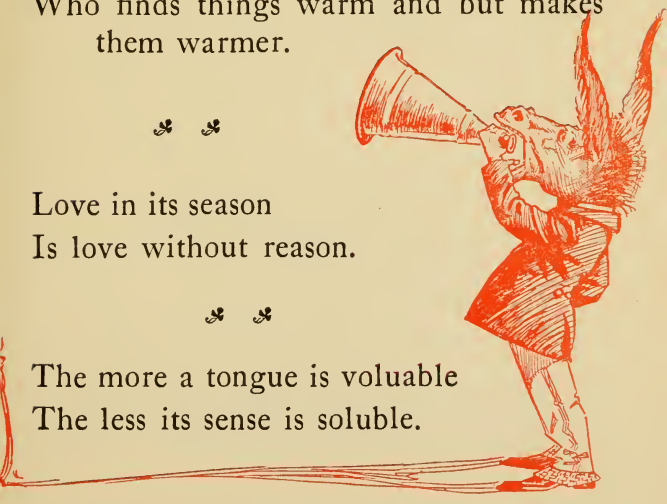
The merchant thinks commendable
Whatever goods are vendible.

Only a fool will care to boast
Of where his shoe doth pinch the most.

Alas! for the fate of the social reformer
Who finds things warm and but makes them warmer.

Love in its season
Is love without reason.

The more a tongue is voluable
The less its sense is soluble.

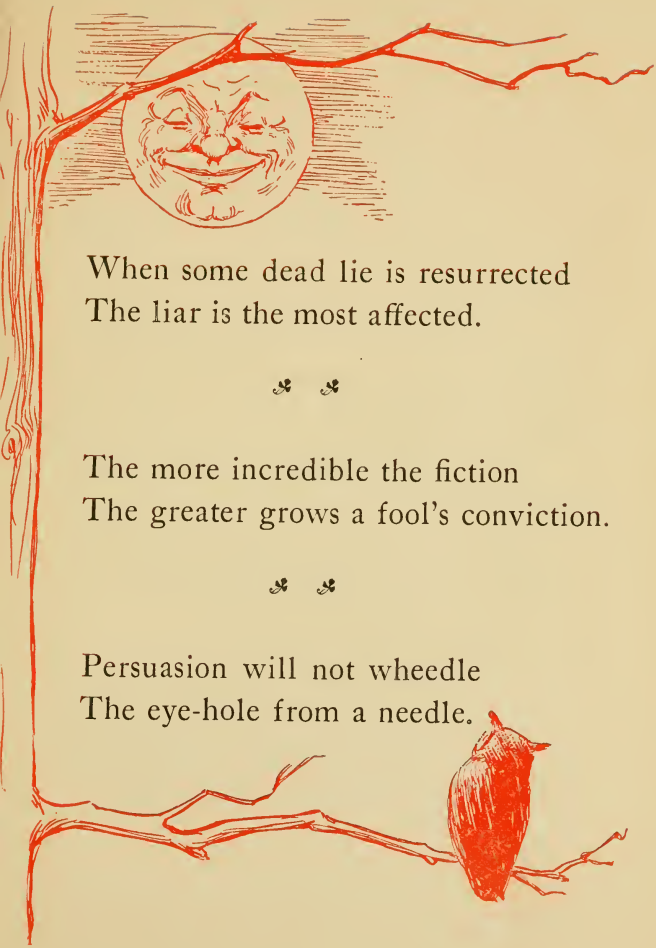


If you're a hero, for example,
Don't prove it by the worms you trample.

The devil surely gets his portion
Without resorting to extortion.

We still hold fate accountable.
For what proves unsurmountable.

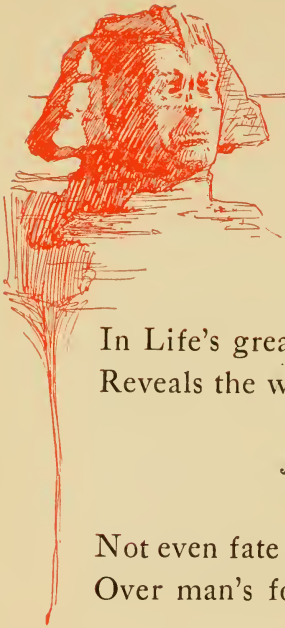
There's many things more edifying
Than man's precocity in lying.



When some dead lie is resurrected
The liar is the most affected.

The more incredible the fiction
The greater grows a fool's conviction.

Persuasion will not wheedle
The eye-hole from a needle.



To trust to intuition
Is reason's superstition.

In Life's great volume every leaf
Reveals the water-mark of grief.

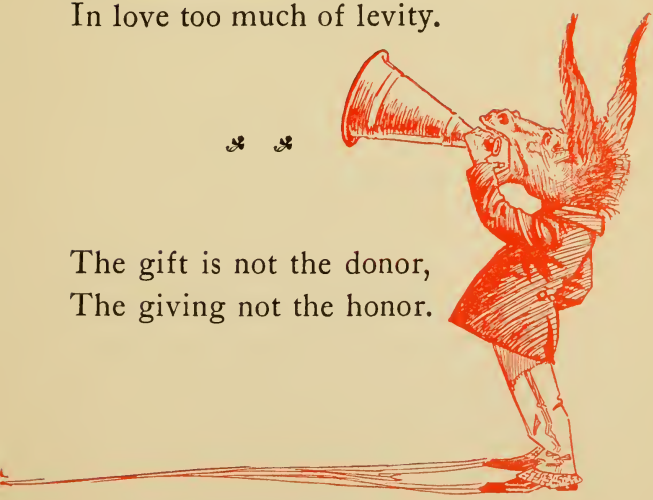
Not even fate can claim control
Over man's fortitude of soul.

Mankind should never lengthen
The arm it helps to strengthen.

Because a sword is pliable
Proves not 'tis unreliable.

In law too little brevity;
In love too much of levity.

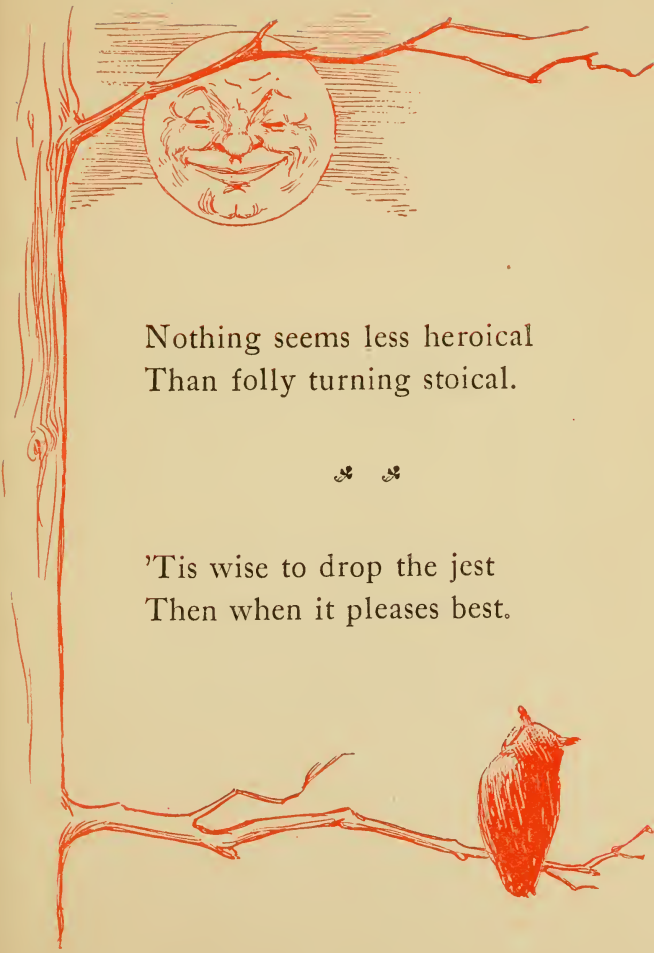
The gift is not the donor,
The giving not the honor.



He buys his life too dearly
Who takes it too severely.

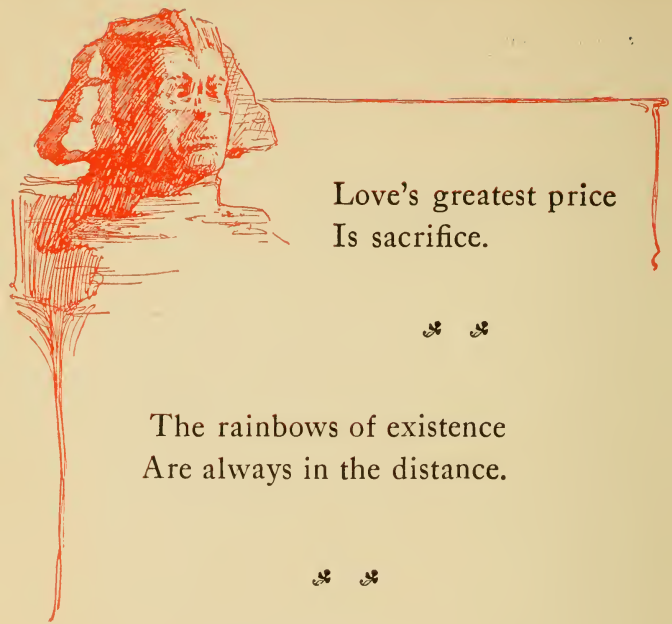
When going forth to borrow
Never go forth in sorrow.

'Tis little use rebelling
Against our earthly dwelling.



Nothing seems less heroical
Than folly turning stoical.

'Tis wise to drop the jest
Then when it pleases best.



Love's greatest price
Is sacrifice.

The rainbows of existence
Are always in the distance.

Dismiss not with impunity
The god of opportunity.

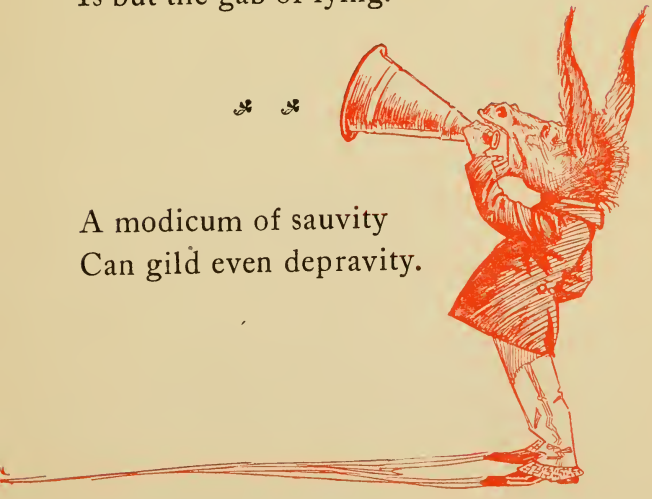
The road to Fruit Forbidden
Is woefully overridden.

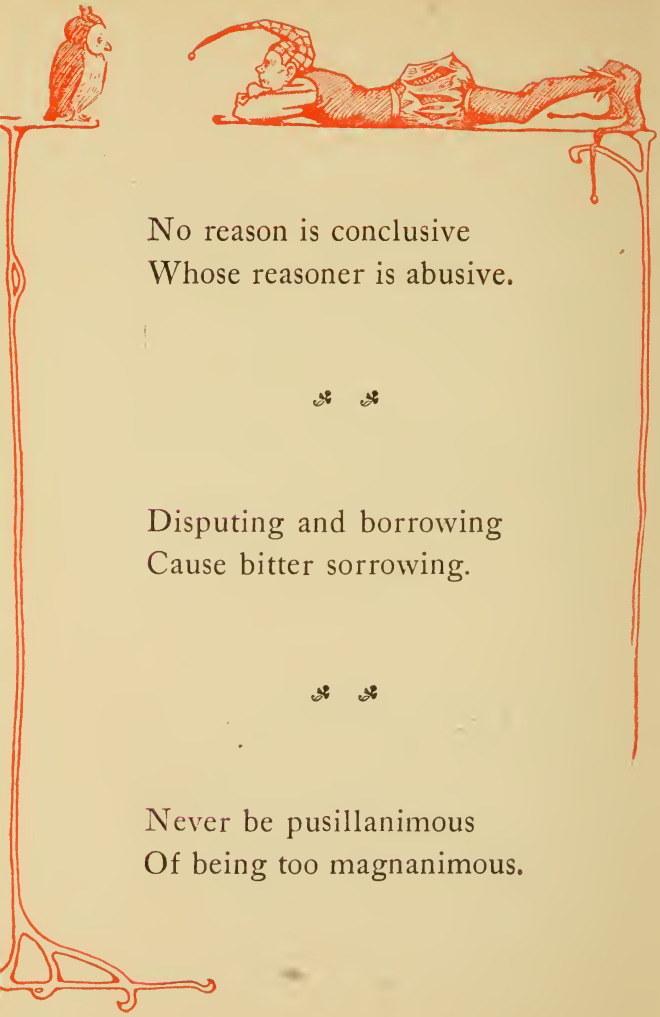
☘ ☘

The gift of prophesying
Is but the gab of lying.

☘ ☘

A modicum of sauvity
Can gild even depravity.

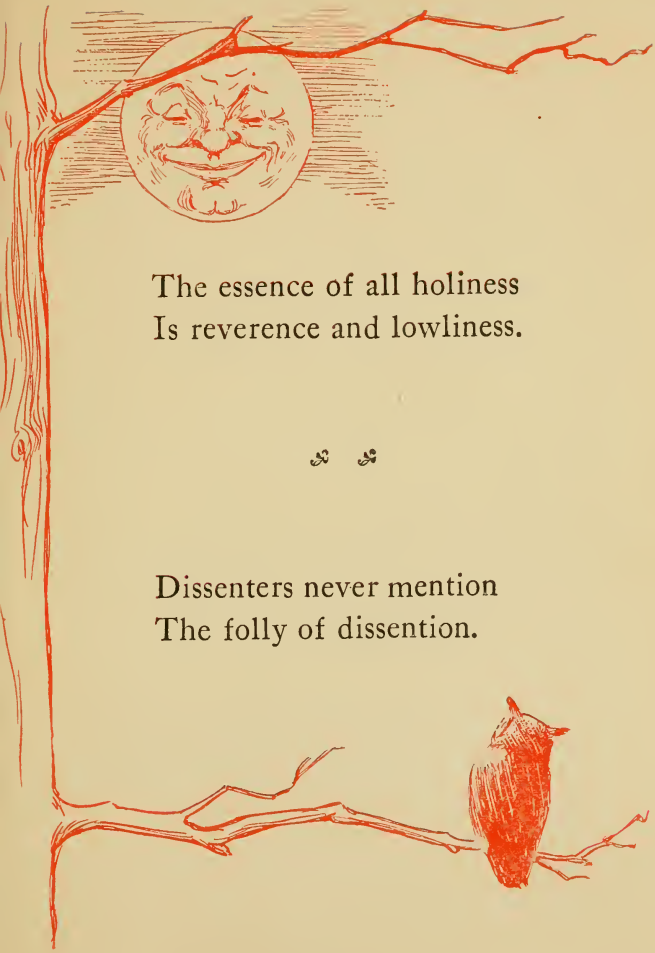




No reason is conclusive
Whose reasoner is abusive.

Disputing and borrowing
Cause bitter sorrowing.

Never be pusillanimous
Of being too magnanimous.



The essence of all holiness
Is reverence and lowliness.

Dissenters never mention
The folly of dissention.

Justice never begrudges
Compassion to its judges.

The mantle of morality
May cover deep rascality.

Connubial felicity
Is based on some duplicity.

Plenty with its bin full
Thinks Poverty is sinful.

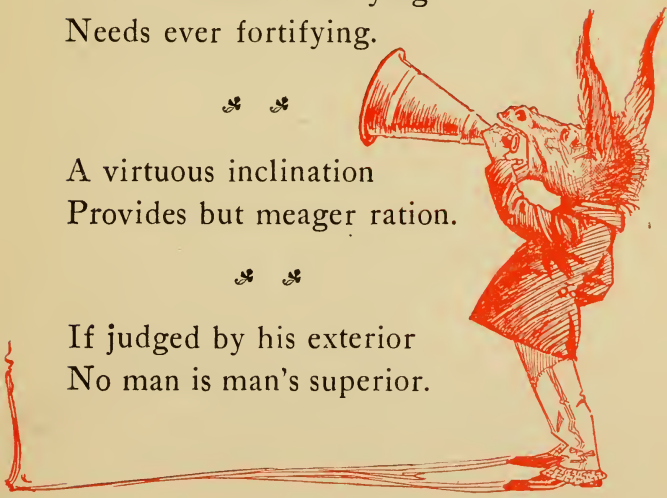
An oath is not an act of daring;
There's truer virtue in forbearing.

Defeat becomes a noble master
When teaching us to shun disaster.

Not truthfulness but lying
Needs ever fortifying.

A virtuous inclination
Provides but meager ration.

If judged by his exterior
No man is man's superior.

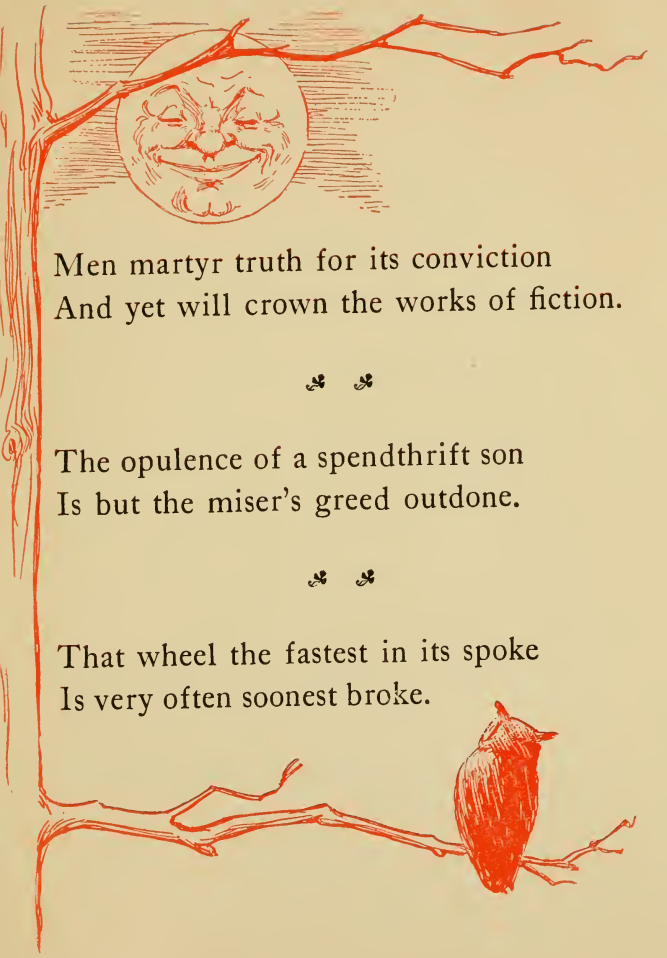


To-morrow's wealth cannot outweigh
The priceless value of to-day.

Linked to a virtue that is vicious
E'en love itself grows meretricious.

Folly doth still attend the birth
Of every mortal on the earth.

The devil's virtuous intention
Is but a pin-point in dimension.



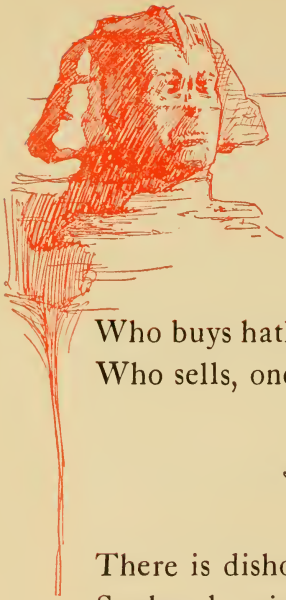
Men martyr truth for its conviction
And yet will crown the works of fiction.

☙ ☙

The opulence of a spendthrift son
Is but the miser's greed outdone.

☙ ☙

That wheel the fastest in its spoke
Is very often soonest broke.



A sordid thought
Is easily bought.

Who buys hath always eyes too few;
Who sells, one eye for him will do.

There is dishonor in detraction
Spoken by either sex or faction.

This adage learn and treasure long;
Challenge no fool to do thee wrong.

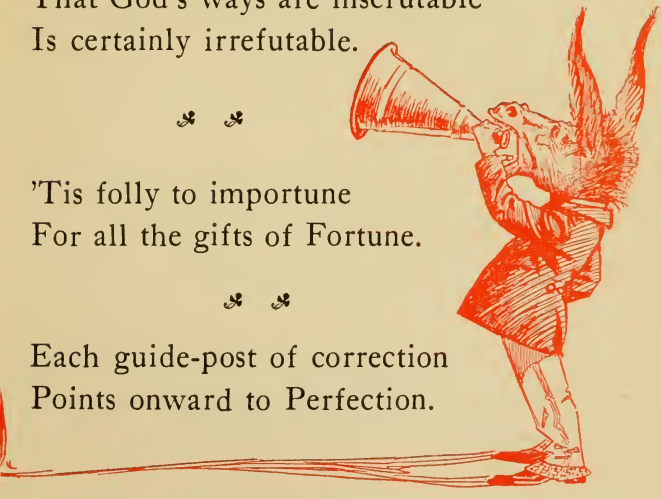
The youth is apt to mock at age,
While folly envieth the sage.

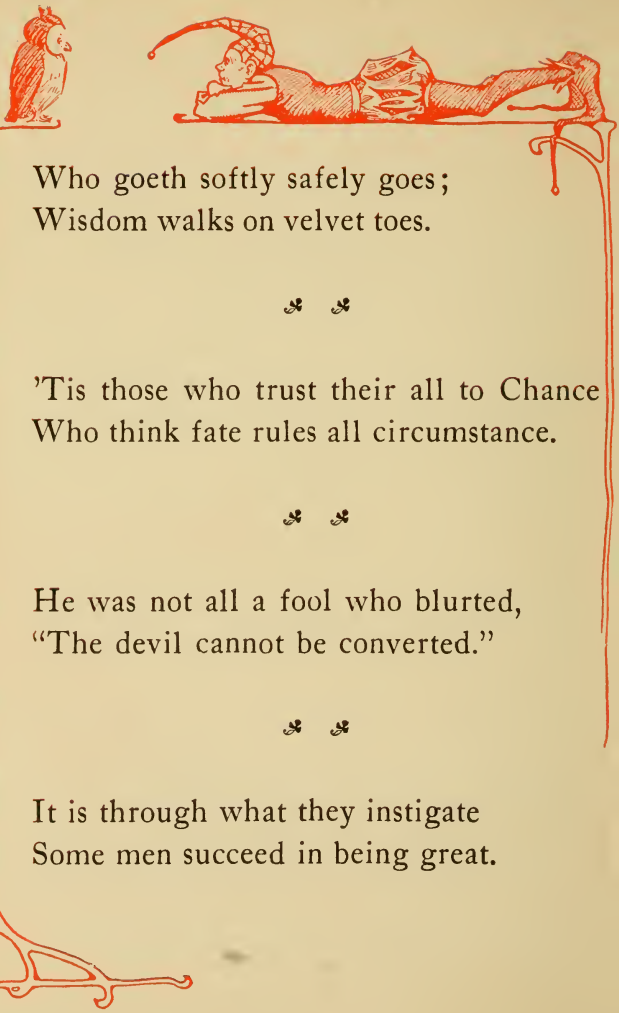
Sometimes an ounce of knowledge
Is worth a pound of college.

That God's ways are inscrutable
Is certainly irrefutable.

'Tis folly to importune
For all the gifts of Fortune.

Each guide-post of correction
Points onward to Perfection.



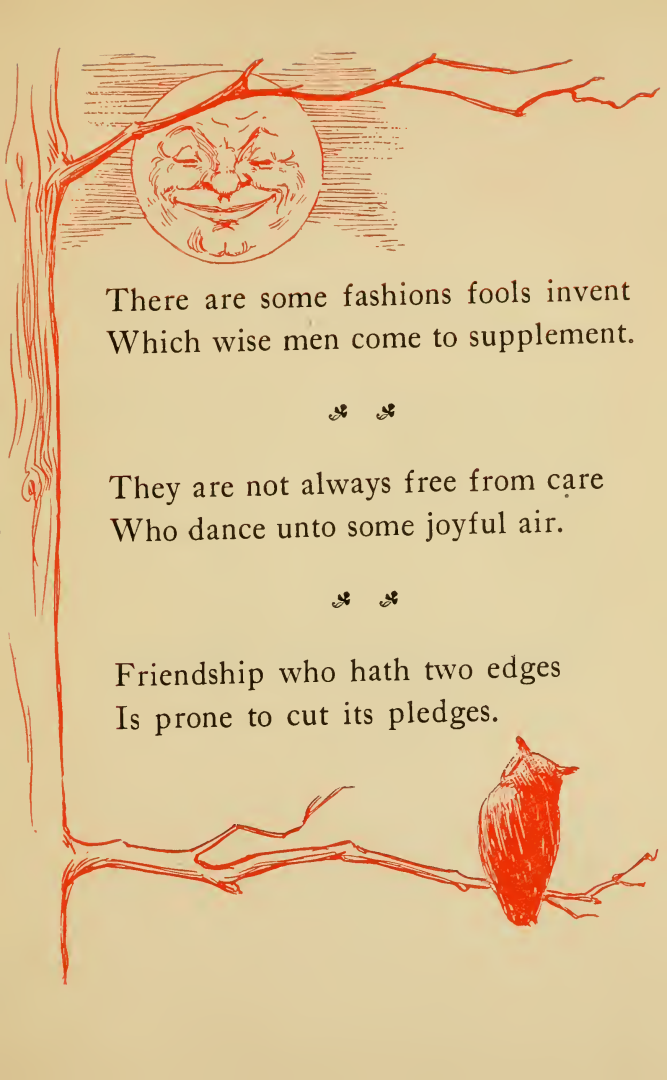


Who goeth softly safely goes;
Wisdom walks on velvet toes.

'Tis those who trust their all to Chance
Who think fate rules all circumstance.

He was not all a fool who blurted,
"The devil cannot be converted."

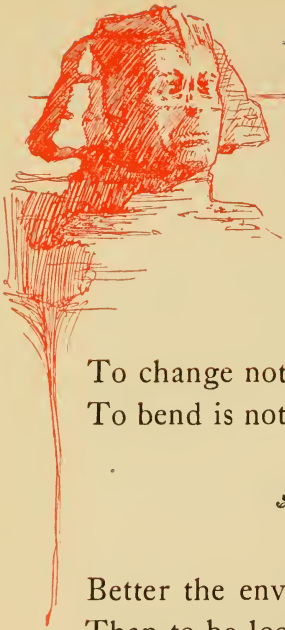
It is through what they instigate
Some men succeed in being great.



There are some fashions fools invent
Which wise men come to supplement.

They are not always free from care
Who dance unto some joyful air.

Friendship who hath two edges
Is prone to cut its pledges.



The virtue of gentility
Is its respectability.

To change not always means to better;
To bend is not to break the fetter.

Better the envy of the witty
Than to be looked upon with pity.

The cap of folly can be fitted
On many heads both wise and witted.

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